

# INTERAGENCY ADVISORY GROUP

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT  
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## Secretariat

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## Minutes of the Committee on Job Evaluation

September 6, 1979

The meeting was chaired by Paul A. Katz, Director, Standards Development Center. Items on the agenda were:

1. Follow up report - Time frame for standards application and position review cycles
  2. Notice - Briefing on Qualification System Options
  3. Notice - Classification and Qualification Standards Projects
  4. Current developments - Second Annual Agency Classification Chiefs Workshop
  5. Briefing - Resource sharing to increase standards production
1. Time frame for standards application and position review cycles

Moe Moser, Chief, Methods Development Branch, Standards Development Center, reported that a forthcoming FPM Letter 536-1 provides a clarification of the presentation on the above subject that appeared originally in FPM Bulletin 273-17, subject: Policy on Demotion Delay/Grade Retention Issues. The new FPM Letter, "Administration of Agency Programs for Training and Placement for Downgraded Employees including the Development of Classification and Placement Plans", makes clear that the six month requirement for implementation of new standards was not intended as a hard and fast rule. Neither was the three year cycle for position reviews. Rather, agencies have the leeway to tailor these guides to individual agency needs and capabilities.

## 2. Briefing on Qualification System Options

Committee members were informed about a forthcoming meeting of the IAG Committees on Staffing and Personnel Research, scheduled for September 11, 1979. The planned agenda is a discussion of the options being considered for changes to the General Schedule qualification system, which are presented in FPM Bulletin 271-33 dated August 17, 1979.

3. Classification and Qualification Standards Projects

Moe Moser noted that FPM Bulletin 271-33 dated June 18, 1979 on standards projects priorities, requested agency responses by July 30, 1979. Because of a mixup in printing and distribution it was possible that some agencies had not received the bulletin. The deadline for receipt of agency recommendations for standards projects was therefore being extended.

4. Current developments - Second Annual Agency Classification Chiefs Workshop

Morris Glazer of Standards Development Center reported that a letter notice, dated August 31, 1979 concerning the Second Annual Agency Classification Chiefs Workshop had been distributed to committee members. It listed the principal objectives of the workshop, which are:

- o Set priorities and work plans to accomplish the recommendations of the First Annual Workshop
- o Report on actions taken and projects in progress resulting from the earlier conference
- o Discuss new priority topics

Workshop organization plans are progressing with the establishment of a conference committee, whose task is to establish a list of topics that will serve as a focus for workshop discussion. Members of the committee include:

Roy Naquin - HEW  
Ivan McCranner - Defense Logistics Agency  
Jerry Booth - Treasury  
Leo Rickwa - Navy  
Joe Schumacher - VA  
Chuck Beers - Commerce  
Lyn Ehrman - HUD

5. Briefing - Resource sharing to increase standards production

A comprehensive briefing on the subject of FPM Bulletin 271-32 of August 23, 1979 was presented by John Warman, Chief, Medical and Legal Occupations Branch, Standards Development Center. The briefing was prepared to assist the agencies in furnishing their comments and suggestions, which are due by October 30, 1979. A copy of the briefing notes, which were distributed to attendees, is attached.

Other handout materials included:

- Special advance copy of course offerings in Position Classification and Compensation by OPM Personnel Management Training Center
- SDC Staff report on Resource Sharing, August 1979

Attachment

Paul A. Katz---Background

The immediate purpose of this meeting is to help you to respond to FPM Bulletin 271-32, issued August 23rd. For those of you who have not received a copy, or who did not bring your copy with you, there are copies available here.

A number of circumstances have combined to generate this Bulletin and the need of this meeting. Before getting into the main presentation and discussion, I would like to provide a little background to summarize how we come to be here to discuss the use of agency resources to develop standards.

To begin with, the demand for newer and ever more specific standards has always exceeded the practical limits of standards development, and that seemingly insatiable demand seems likely to continue. (We know, for example, that from 1947 to 1949, standards were developed which covered an average of 83 series a year, and that was 42 series short of the production goal, let alone of the number of projects requested.)

Second, although we believe our priority setting procedures do a rather good job of picking out the highest priority standards on a government-wide basis, we know that for a particular agency a much smaller project may seem much more urgent.

Third, at the October, 1978 Chiefs of Classification Conference in Williamsburg, and, since then, in our dealings with OPM agency officers, we have heard some agencies express serious interest in taking a greater part in the development of or the funding of standards. When such interest can be channeled to good effect, we would like to do that.

Fourth, money is finite, and is becoming more obviously finite with increasing costs due to pay increases and with the need to implement CSRA.

Fifth, notwithstanding all of this, we have continued our experiments with the VA, as discussed in earlier meetings of the IAG Committee on Job Evaluation, and we continue to meet with others who have expressed interest in similar efforts.

These five circumstances lead to at least two obvious questions:

- a. Is department and agency interest in more new standards translatable into resources?---and,
- b. Can those resources be used in a credible, business-like, cost-effective, and technically sound way without draining the agencies of money and talent better applied elsewhere?

That is the gist of the questions in the FPM Bulletin, and the remainder of our discussion today is to help you consider what your agencies' answers ought to be.

In this meeting, John Warman will elaborate somewhat on the five options discussed in the FPM Bulletin. Stated briefly, these are:

- Option a. - a proposal to establish one-year "fellowships" within the Standards Development Center;
- Option b. - assignment of agency staff to the full time development of standards;
- Option c. - assignment of agency staff to short-term work associated with the development of standards;
- Option d. - agencies can fund SDC standards development projects, or parts of projects; and
- Option e. - SDC can publish summaries of appeal decisions that aid in the interpretation of existing standards, perhaps reducing the need for new standards.

In summary, we intend to act positively on this issue in one way or another. In planning the standards development program, we need to know if we should continue to act on a limited, agency-by-agency basis, or should make these decisions a larger, and more formal part of the government-wide standards development effort.

John Warman--SDC discussion of options

#### I. Options and Essentials

##### A. For Option a:

1. We will take written proposals at any time.
2. The agency supplies the person and the supporting money.
3. SDC supplies the space, the supervision, and travel money.
4. Payoff to the agency is boost in standards production, and a better trained personnel specialist with a greater understanding of OPM's programs and the work of other agencies.
5. The agency staff member may or may not be working on a standard strictly for the agency. He or she may do one for another agency while we do one in return for his or her

agency. Or, the assignment need not be based on a quid pro quo arrangement at all.

B. For Option b:

1. Similar to recent VA agreements, but with a few additions.
2. What are the essential features of these agreements?
  - a. They must be in writing and spell out the responsibilities of both parties.
  - b. They must have a procedure for dealing with an unacceptable product (i.e., SDC can't absorb the actual rewriting of the product).
  - c. Formal approval by SDC will be required at pre-stated milestones.
  - d. Specified staff must be dedicated to the project essentially full time.
3. We advise against formal written proposals for this option prior to October 30th. We believe we should review agency comments on this entire question first. We are open, however, to informal "pre-proposal" meetings at any time.

C. For Option c:

1. Same arrangements as for Option b, including the advice against written proposals before October 30th.

D. For Option d:

1. It may be that several agencies would like to join in funding projects of mutual interest.
2. Same advice as for options b and c concerning timing of formal proposals.

E. For Option e:

1. Strictly speaking, this is not a resource sharing option. Nevertheless, there are several things you can help us with.
  - a. You can tell us if you like the idea.

- b. If we do this, you can help us by identifying any OPM appeal decisions that you have found especially helpful in interpreting the standard.

## II. Dangers, Swamps, and Cautions

### A. Limits

1. This is not the sort of business where if one person can do it in a year, 365 people can do it in a day.
2. We will be limited by:
  - a. available supervision
  - b. newness of analysts to standards development
  - c. available agency resources:
    - 1) to contribute staff
    - 2) to contribute money
    - 3) to comment on drafts
    - 4) to implement final standards

### B. Priority setting problems

1. Pressure for overly narrow series?
2. S/A standards could drive out multi-agency work.
3. Rich agencies might outbid poor agencies for SDC attention.
4. Easier projects might drive out tough, but needed, projects.
5. Will we need two priority lists, one for agency production, and one for in-house production?
6. Resources are still finite.